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was made secretary and treasurer. An executive committee composed of one member from each State and territory of the United States and province of Canada is provided for in the constitution, but the committee has not been completed as yet. Any person in the United States or Canada endorsing the declaration of principles may become a member. The dues are one dollar per year, and entitle the member to the publications of the society. A bulletin is to be issued as often as the funds will permit, probably once a month. The committee presented two bills embodying the principle of proportional representation, the Gove and the Swiss systems. There was no hostility to either, but it was thought best to offer both. The object of the society "is to promote the reform of legislative assemblies by abandoning the present system of electing single representatives from limited territorial districts by a majority or plurality vote, and by substituting the following :

- " 1. All representatives shall be elected at large, on a general ticket, either without district divisions or in districts as large as practicable.
2. The election shall be in such form that the respective parties, or political groups, shall secure representation in proportion to the number of votes cast by them, respectively."

Chicago.

STOUGHTON COOLEY.

#### THE BETTERMENT CLAUSE OF THE LONDON IMPROVEMENT BILL.

It is of more than passing interest to the problem of municipal taxation to note the tendency which, considerably developed in America and in Germany, has recently re-asserted itself with marked force in the projected change of the system of municipal taxation in London.\* It is the principle that the burden of taxation should be distributed amongst those elements of the community who derive palpable material advantages from municipal activity. As illusory in its effects, and as unjust in its application as this principle may become when carried into most fields of municipal activity, its justification in the domain of highway improvements is hardly to be questioned.

The act in question is known as "*An Act to Empower the London County Council to Make New Streets and Street Improvements, etc.*" (56 and 57 Vict. Session, 1893.)† The measure is based upon the principle that these improvements "will be effected out of public funds, charged over the whole country, and will or may increase in value or

\* See the valuable essay of Dr. Victor Rosewater in *Columbia College Studies in Political Science* upon "Special Assessments; a Study in Municipal Finance."

† The history of this bill has been a peculiar one. Passed by the House of Commons, the Betterment Clause was thrown out by the Lords. Reconsidered in this form by the Lower House, the Betterment Clause was reinstated. A second time the House of Lords rejected it. The matter stands thus at present constituting a real grievance of the Lower against the Upper House.

benefit lands in the neighborhood of the improvements, which will not be acquired for the purpose thereof, and it is reasonable that provision should be made under which in respect or in consideration of such increased value or benefit a charge should be placed on such lands." It is then stipulated that all lands within the area of the "Limits of Deviation" shall be liable to have such an improvement charge placed upon them. For this purpose the London County Council is directed to undertake an assessment of the adjacent property wherein a statement of the amount which "In the opinion of the Council will be the enhanced value or benefit derived or to be derived" by such lands. Provision is then made for the hearing of objections of property owners to such assessments, in which case an arbitrator appointed by the Local Government Board, who has the power of amending such assessments and whose decision shall be final. The charge upon the lands thus subjected to assessment is to be "three per centum per annum upon one-half of the amount which, in the opinion of the Council, will be the enhanced value of the benefits derived or to be derived by the said lands from the improvements." The charges are to be paid by the freeholder of property.

Although this principle in its advanced form has been sanctioned only for the rebuilding of Vauxhall Bridge and the necessary rearrangement of adjacent streets, there can be no doubt that its acceptance for further highway improvements is assured, not merely for the purpose of defraying the costs of such improvements, but also to secure to the community at large at least a portion of the benefits which they, through their united action, have called into existence.

*Philadelphia.*

LEO. S. ROWE.

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#### THE NATIONAL PRISON ASSOCIATION.

The National Prison Association meeting for 1893 was held in Chicago in connection with the National and International Conferences of Charities and Correction, so that only three separate sessions were held. The first, on the evening of June 7, was devoted entirely to memorial addresses in honor of its deceased president, Gen. R. B. Hayes, who for ten years past has been president of its annual meetings.

Gen. R. Brinkerhoff, vice-president of the Association, made the opening and leading address, and was followed by a number of brief testimonials from other members.

On the morning of the eighth, a session was held to receive and consider the report from the Committee upon Prison Discipline, by its chairman, Captain James W. Pope, Superintendent of the U. S. Military Prison at Fort Leavenworth.